

DALTON-IN-FURNESS
URBAN SANITARY DISTRICT.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health
for the Year 1920.



Dalton-in-Furness :
W. HOLMES & SMITH, LTD., Printers.
1921.



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ANNUAL REPORT

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Medical Officer of Health.

DALTON-IN-FURNESS URBAN DISTRICT, 1920.

To the Chairman and Members of the Dalton-in-Furness
Urban District Council.

GENTLEMEN,

In accordance with the Order of the Ministry of Health, I beg to present to you my report of the health and sanitary condition of the district under my control as Medical Officer of Health.

INSPECTION OF THE DISTRICT.—One Inspector of Nuisances is employed by the Council, and I am satisfied that the district is kept under regular and constant supervision.

NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE DISTRICT.

POPULATION.—When the Census was taken in 1911, the population was 10,765. At this time there were 2,483 inhabited houses and 280 uninhabited. Owing to conditions brought about by the war, practically all the uninhabited houses, both fit and unfit for occupation, have become inhabited, and even, in spite of the fact that the cessation of hostilities induced a great number of workers to return to their ordinary avocations in other parts of the country, the houses have remained tenanted, and there is no doubt an acutely-felt shortage and a considerable amount of overcrowding, and this overcrowding would be accentuated were it possible to close dwellings which are obviously unfit for habitation; this, it is impossible to do, because accommodation cannot be found for the displaced population. The population is distributed as under:—

Dalton and Newton	...	...	8930
Lincal and Marton	...	...	900
Askam and Heleth	...	...	3530
Total	...	...	13,360

PHYSICAL FEATURES AND CHARACTER OF THE DISTRICT.

Dalton is built on a gravel sub-soil, with the limestone outcropping at the North and East parts of the town. From the North to Haume and Greenscoe we still have the limestone, which at these places runs into the clay slate. Askam is built on the sand, and Ireleth on the Lower Ireleth slate, the limestone appearing again at Dunnerholme. Lindal is mostly limestone, with clay slate at Marton.

The chief occupations of the inhabitants are iron ore mining and limestone quarrying, but about 600 men find employment at the large works of Vickers, Ltd., at Barrow-in-Furness.

WATER SUPPLY.—The water supply is derived from the reservoirs of the Barrow Corporation situated at Powka Beck, and these reservoirs are supplied from the upland surface water. The supply is constant and there is little fear of animal organic pollution, and I have not heard of any disease arising which could be attributed to plumbo-solvent action.

Complaints of insufficiency of pressure in the higher reaches of the town have been frequent, and it is difficult to see how any increase of pressure can be obtained so long as the undertakers persist in the folly of delivering the water to Dalton from the supplementary reservoir situated on the summit of Hoghouse Brow. Why it should be considered necessary to reduce the head of pressure in this way is inconceivable, unless it be the fear that the old and worn out mains would not stand the extra pressure that would be brought to bear upon them, were the water delivered from the main reservoir at Powka Beck.

An effort has been made, and is being made, to increase the pressure by scraping the mains, and though there may have been an improvement it has not yielded an entirely satisfactory result.

There are certain houses and groups of houses, viz., Minnikin Hall, Tythebarn, Green Hills and Longlands which, being outside the radius of the mains, are without a sufficient supply of water, but, although in years gone by, every effort has been made to bring about an extension of the mains, nothing has been done, and with labour and material standing at the present high figure it is unlikely that anything can be done, but looking at the fact that the main supply to

Newton has been scraped with a view to improving the pressure and that complaints are still received as to the insufficiency of the supply, it might be desirable for the Council to consider the advisability of requesting the undertakers to lay down a main of increased capacity which would be available for extension to the dwellings named above.

RIVERS.—The overflow from Po vka Beck Reservoir is the only stream running through your district and this is not liable to pollution.

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.—The sewerage of the town is laid out on the dual system, separate sewers for the storm water being provided. The sewage is taken into settling tanks, and after filtration through coke, is discharged into the sewers of the Barrow Corporation at Furness Abbey and thence into the sea.

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.—So far as the sewers of Dalton Town are concerned, I have every reason to think that they have been working quite satisfactorily. There have been no complaints of flooding in the lower parts of the town, as was the case a few years ago, before the new storm overflow sewer was provided.

MARSH STREET (YSKAM) OUTFALL.—This outfall has been diverted by the provision of 300 yards of 9 in. pipes discharging into the Main Sewer and thence to the tanks. Previously the sewage was discharged on to the beach and was a constant source of nuisance.

IRELETH.—A 9 in. sewer will shortly be laid from the Travellers' Rest Inn to join the main Hollowgate Sewer, and thence by the main in Duddon Road to the tanks. This work has been held in abeyance on account of the exigencies of the war.

ANTICROSS (DALTON).—A new 9 in. sewer will shortly be laid from Anticross and Thornton Place to join the main outfall sewer at the foot of Cemetery Hill. By the completion of this work the Council will be in a position to close three cesspools, which were an ever recurring expense in cleansing and gave rise to constant complaint.

REFUSE REMOVAL.—In the early autumn the Council decided to delegate this supremely important branch of sanitary administration to the Sanitary Inspector, with a view to increased expedition in carrying out the work of removal and as a measure of economy. The time has scarcely arrived when it would be wise to form a judgment as to the result of the change, but I feel confident that the Council, and especially the Health Committee, will not permit the mere question of finance to influence them in allowing anything short of perfect efficiency to prevail in a work which may have a far reaching effect upon the health and comfort of the community.

SCHOOLS.—The sanitary condition of the Elementary Day Schools is generally quite satisfactory. On account of the epidemic of Diphtheria, the Lindal-in-Furness Schools were carefully inspected, and minor defects were remedied by the Education Authority. I am hopeful that when the Ireleth Sewer is completed, that the existing earth closets will be converted into w.c.'s.

DAIRIES AND COWSHEDS: MILK SUPPLY.—Although there have been no complaints of the quality or quantity of the milk supply, I find myself unable to speak with any satisfaction of the way in which the supply is produced. There are a few, very few, sheds which are up to the standard of modern requirements; others are faulty, but might be made to comply with the Bye-laws adopted by the Council; others, and I think, the majority are quite hopeless, and nothing but entire reconstruction would make them satisfactory. I have recently reported to the Health Committee on the condition of some of the very worst sheds in your district, and copies of my reports have been forwarded to the owners, but I am bound to admit that I am not sanguine that any useful purpose will be served by the proceeding, nor do I see what can possibly be done until the law is made more definite upon the point.

MILK (Mothers and Children) ORDER, 1918.—Your Council have taken advantage of this Order, and milk is supplied, in necessitous cases for expectant mothers, and children under five years old, either free or under cost price.

HOUSING.—In spite of the fact that on the cessation of hostilities a large number of men left the district to return to their

pre-war avocations in other parts of the country, there is a great shortage of accommodation for the working class population. There is still a considerable amount of overcrowding, and many houses that are now occupied are far below a reasonable standard. With prices of labour and material at the present high figure, I am quite prepared to admit that the problem is one which it is difficult to solve, nevertheless, I am bound to urge the Council to take advantage of the Government's offer, before it is too late, and provide better housing for the working classes of the district—the responsibility is theirs and must be shouldered. I sometimes wonder if we sufficiently realise the conditions under which many of our working people live? I am convinced that none of us would care to live for a single week in many of the dwellings in which they are compelled to spend the greater part of their lives.

VITAL STATISTICS.

BIRTHS.—The births registered during the year that is past have numbered 368, which is equal to a birth-rate of 27·5 per 1,000. In the previous year there were 320 births, the birth-rate being 23·9 per 1,000.

The births have been distributed as follows :—

	1920.		1919.	
	Births	Birth-rate	Births	Birth-rate
Dalton and Newton...	262	29·3	198	22·1
Lindal and Marton ...	23	25·5	20	22·9
Askam and Ireleth ...	83	23·5	102	28·8
	368	27·5	320	23·9

There have been 185 male children born and 183 females. There have been 23 illegitimate births—12 males and 11 females.

It will be noted from the above that there has been an increase of 48 over the previous year, in the number of births, arising entirely in the Dalton District, Askam and Lindal showing a decrease in the number.

DEATHS.—There have been 213 deaths recorded, which produces a death-rate of 15·9 per 1,000, as compared with 181 in the year 1919 and a death-rate of 13·5 per 1,000.

Distribution of the deaths.

	1920.		1919.	
	Deaths	Death-rate	Deaths	Death-rate
Dalton and Newton...	145	16.2	128	14.3
Lindal and Marton ...	20	22.2	11	12.2
Askam and Ireleth ...	48	13.5	42	11.9
	213	15.9	181	13.5

There have been 120 deaths in males and 93 in females.

INFANTILE DEATHS.—The Infantile Deaths are the deaths of infants before reaching the end of the first year of life. I find that in 1920 there were 35 deaths at this age period, equal to an infantile death-rate of 92.3 per 1,000 births. In the year 1919 there were 25 infantile deaths, the rate then being 78.1 per 1,000 births. These deaths have been distributed as follows:—

	1920.		1919.	
	Infantile Deaths	Infantile Death-rate	Infantile Deaths	Infantile Death-rate
Dalton and Newton ...	23	87.4	15	75.7
Lindal and Marton ...	2	86.9	1	50.0
Askam and Ireleth ...	10	120.4	9	88.2
	35	92.3	25	78.1

There have been 2 deaths of illegitimate infants.

CAUSES OF INFANTILE DEATHS.

	Dalton and Newton	Lindal and Marton	Askam and Ireleth	Total
Congenital Defects ...	6	—	—	6
Bronchitis ...	6	—	—	6
Premature Birth ...	4	2	—	6
Convulsions ...	2	—	2	4
Pneumonia ...	1	—	1	2
Whooping Cough ...	1	—	2	3
Nephritis ...	1	—	—	1
Tubercular Meningitis	—	—	1	1
Laryngitis ...	1	—	—	1
Measles ...	1	—	4	5
Totals ...				
	23	2	10	35

There is a regrettable increase in the number of Infantile Deaths, and it would scarcely be unfair or unkind to parents to say that with increased knowledge and greater care at least 50 per cent.

of these deaths might be avoided. This lack of knowledge is chiefly displayed in allowing infants to contract chest affections, and great carelessness is undoubtedly displayed in exposing them to the risk of contracting epidemic diseases, in the mistaken idea that sooner or later every child must have these diseases; especially is this so during epidemics of measles and whooping cough.

INFANT WELFARE.—This work, as I have stated in previous reports, is under the supervision of the County Council. The centre is well attended, as the subjoined figures show.

			Individual Children	
			Attending	Attendances
1920—Under 1 year ...	...	...	78	302
From 1 to 2 years ...	...	...	25	73
Over 2 years ...	...	...	57	132
1919—Under 1 year ...	...	...	76	256
From 1 to 2 years ...	...	...	15	35
Over 2 years ...	...	...	34	63

From the above, it may be assumed that the work is being gradually estimated at its real worth, and it is to be hoped, that as time goes on more and more mothers will take advantage of the great privilege offered to them; in this way we may hope to stop the serious drain upon our infant life. Whilst I am prepared to admit that the mother is the safest guardian of her child, still she must have knowledge of motherhood, and this does not come by instinct—it must be learnt—and this knowledge, for the majority of mothers, can best be gained at an Infant Welfare Centre. A gradually increasing knowledge of the laws of health and the means of preventing disease has caused a steady fall in the death-rate at all ages, but the decrease of the deaths of infants under one year of age has not corresponded with the decrease in the ordinary death-rate.

SENILE DEATHS.—In persons of 65 years of age and upwards there have been 54 deaths, as compared with 63 in the year 1919 and these have been distributed as under.

Dalton and Newton	...	35
Lindal and Marton	...	5
Askam and Ireleth	...	14
Total		54

PHTHISIS.—There have 22 deaths from pulmonary tuberculosis (phthisis) as compared with 17 in the year 1919, and these have been distributed as follows :—

		1920	1919
Dalton and Newton	...	16	12
Lindal and Marton	...	1	1
Askam and Ireleth ...	...	5	4
		—	—
Totals		22	17
		—	—

From Tuberculosis of other organs 6 deaths have occurred at Dalton and Newton, 1 at Lindal and Marton, and 3 at Askam and Ireleth. The following notifications of Tubercular Diseases have been received :—

		Pulmonary Tuberculosis	Tuberculosis of Other Organs	Total
Dalton and Newton	...	26	5	31
Lindal and Marton	...	3	—	3
Askam and Ireleth	...	10	4	14
		—	—	—
Totals		39	9	48
		—	—	—

I mentioned in my last Annual Report that the treatment of Tubercular Diseases is now in the hands of the County Council, whose Medical Officer and Nurse attend twice a week at the Dispensary established at Ulverston, and in addition to this, visit cases at their own homes. I think it may safely be said that sufferers from Tubercular Diseases are more ready than they were a few years ago to accept treatment, and it is a pity that this treatment cannot be initiated at the very outset of the trouble. It is possible that with a more enlightened public opinion, we may have an increasing number of applications for assistance at the very commencement of impaired health.

VENEREAL DISEASES.—Some years ago I circularised the Medical Practitioner in your district with a view to estimating the extent to which diseases of this type prevailed, and I found that there was a very small demand made upon Practitioners for treatment. The County Council have an arrangement with the North Lonsdale Hospital at Barrow to undertake the free treatment of any cases making application, but I am doubtful whether advantage has been taken of this privilege in a single instance, during the past year.

CANCER.—In Dalton and Newton there have been 16 deaths from Cancer of various organs, 1 in Lindal and Marton, and 3 in Askam and Ireleth. In 1919 there over 17 deaths from this cause.

ZYMOTIC DEATHS.—From diseases classified as Zymotic, there have been 38 deaths, which is equal to a zymotic death-rate of 2·84 per 1,000. These deaths have been distributed as under :—

	Whooping Cough	Measles	Scarlet Fever	Diph- theria	Total
Dalton and Newton...	5	13	1	1	20
Lindal and Marton ...	—	3	—	4	7
Askam and Ireleth ...	1	9	—	1	11
Totals ...	6	25	1	6	38

In the year 1919 only 3 zymotic deaths were recorded, giving a rate of ·22 per 1,000. The great increase in the deaths from this class of disease has been due to those arising from whooping cough, measles and diphtheria. In the epidemic of measles, which was at its height in April, May and June, 25 lives were lost, and the disease necessitated the closure of the Askam Junior and Senior Schools, the Lindal and Furness Schools, and the Dalton Council Infants' and Church of England Infants' Schools.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.—The following table gives the number of cases of notifiable diseases reported during the year.

	Dalton and Newton	Lindal and Marton	Askam and Ireleth	Totals 1920
Scarlet Fever ...	12	—	—	12
Diphtheria ...	2	12	6	20
Erysipelas ...	1	—	1	2
Ophthalmia ...	—	—	6	6
Pneumonia ...	1	—	—	1
Encephalitis Lethargica ...	1	—	1	2
Totals ...	17	12	14	43

TYPHOID FEVER.—This disease is said to be an index of the sanitary intelligence of a community, and if such is the case it speaks well for the condition of your district when I say that not a single case of the disease has been notified during the year, and only one in the last three years. What a contrast to the tale which had to be told a few years ago. Still, we must not assume that we have reached, or even are reaching, anything approaching a stage of perfection. Many things remain to be done, and many conditions which are always a menace to health must be removed.

INFLUENZA.—Only 4 deaths from Influenza have been registered, the respective ages being 30, 78, 74 and 73.

DIPHTHERIA.—An epidemic of this disease broke out at Lindal and Marton in the early autumn, and necessitated the closure of the Lindal-in-Furness Schools on two occasions. The infection spread to Ireleth, and the schools here had to be closed. Although the whole of the children in the schools were examined by the School Medical Officer and myself, we were never able to locate the original source of infection, but it is more than likely that there was a "carrier" case.

SCARLET FEVER.—We have not been visited by any extensive outbreak of Scarlet Fever.

CASES OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE generally are isolated in the High Carley Fever Hospital, which is under the management of a Joint Board. I find little difficulty, as a rule, in persuading parents to allow sufferers to be removed.

Arrangements have been made with the Barrow Corporation to receive any cases of Small Pox that might arise in the area of the Joint Board, but fortunately it has not been necessary to take advantage of the privilege.

In conclusion, I must tender my thanks to the Health Committee and my colleagues, for their kindly co-operation and support at all times.

I am, Gentlemen,

Yours obediently,

G. H. PATTERSON,

L.R.C.P. LOND., M.R.C.S. ENG., D.P.H. LOND.
Medical Officer of Health.

21st March, 1921.

Sanitary Inspector's Report.

FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31ST, 1920.

To the Chairman and Members of the Dalton-in-Furness Urban District Council.

GENTLEMEN,

I have again the honour of presenting to you my Annual Report of the sanitary condition of the District, showing in detail the number of inspections of the various kinds made, and also the nature of the nuisances discovered and dealt with.

INSPECTION OF DISTRICT.

The whole of the area has been inspected during the past year, whilst many premises on which nuisances are likely to exist have been visited very frequently.

NUMBER AND NATURE OF INSPECTIONS MADE.

Inspections under the Housing Acts ...	...	...	269
Other house inspections and re-visits ...	...	...	305
Bakehouses and other premises on which food is prepared or exposed for sale ...	...	...	179
Inspections of premises from which Infectious Diseases were notified ...	...	...	32
Dwelling Houses or rooms disinfected ...	...	...	32
Cowsheds Inspections ...	...	...	213
Slaughterhouses do. ...	...	...	401
Workshops other than Bakehouses ...	...	...	91
Number of Notices served (Statutory) ...	...	...	72
" " (Informal) ...	...	...	198

NUISANCES DEALT WITH.

Houses with blocked drains ...	...	...	30
" defective " ...	...	...	6
" " W.C's ...	...	...	18
" " Water fittings to flushing cisterns ...	...	...	18
" blocked W.C's ...	...	...	24
" defective gutters and spoutings ...	...	...	32
" " roofs ...	...	...	43

Houses with defective walls	...	...	...	10
" flush pipes & vent shafts	...	...	...	9
" defective sinks	...	...	...	12
" insufficient waste pipes	...	...	...	19
" defective yard surfaces	...	...	...	13
" " floors	...	...	...	6
" " chimney stacks	...	...	...	18
Filthy Houses	...	...	...	3
Houses with defective washing boilers	...	...	...	7
" fire grates and ranges	...	...	...	11
" gullies	...	...	...	3
Offensive Accumulations	...	...	...	11
Animals kept so as to be a nuisance	...	...	...	5
Nuisances arising from the escape of coal gas	...	...	...	3
Smoke nuisances	...	...	...	1
Carcases requiring removal	...	...	...	15

MILK SUPPLY.

Most of the milk consumed in the District is produced within the area. To a lesser extent than hitherto, a portion is brought in from the rural district of Low Furness.

No complaints have been made as to the quality, while the adequacy of supply has been sufficient to meet the demands. Owing to the excessively high price of this commodity, I have no hesitation in saying that in my opinion many of the children are not obtaining the amount of milk they ought to receive.

The most serious thing we have to complain of is the condition of the Cowsheds from which the milk is produced, although the unsatisfactory conditions have been reported on for years past, very little is done to remedy the defects.

The conditions are practically the same as when we reported last. Detailed inspections have been made during the year, and reports presented to the Sanitary Committee by the Medical Officer who has notified owners as to the requirements which are necessary to comply with the provisions of the bye-laws in force in your district.

There are 54 Cowkeepers and 2 Purveyors of milk in the District.

The Sanitary Committee have not as yet taken any steps with a view to ascertaining the conditions of the milk as regards Tuberculosis. In cases where the cattle are suspected of suffering from the disease, owners are advised to either isolate or slaughter the animals. 4 have been slaughtered during the year.

FOOD INSPECTION.

Much of the time given to this work is taken up with the inspection of prepared foods intended for consumption. Requests have also been made by various traders to examine various classes of food.

At different times during the year quantities of both fresh and cured fish has been found unfit for food.

No difficulty has been experienced in dealing with any insanitary condition on premises used for the preparation and sale of food.

The bakehouses, of which there are 14, have been kept in good order; two notices only being received from H.M. Inspector of Factories, in regard to ventilation and sanitary convenience in Askam.

Limewashing and general cleansing have been carried out in accordance with regulations.

51 inspections of this class of workshop have been made.

ASHPITS CLEANSING.

The control of the ashpit cleansing staff was transferred by your Council to my department in September of the past year. This was done with a view to endeavouring to effect an economy in the cost of doing the work, and at the same time to secure a greater efficiency in the cleansing.

A considerable amount of time and attention has been given in re-organising the system, and also the supervision of the staff. As a result, we can safely say that the cleansing of premises has been attended to more frequently, and also, to some extent, some economy has been effected in the cost. This latter item is not so much felt as yet, owing to the condition of the ashpits when the work was taken over, the work having fallen very much in arrear. If a greater efficiency can be attained, even without any economy being made, it will be money well spent, as there is no more important branch of work in sanitary administration.

The fact that very few complaints are now being received from occupiers, of the refuse being retained for too long a period on the premises, indicates an improvement in this direction, and we are hopeful that eventually we shall be in a position of cleansing the whole area at least once in every month without increasing the staff. Everything is now done to reduce the cost as far as possible, consistent with

efficiency. The ashpit cleansing for the year is as follows :—

No. of Ashpits emptied	3,401
„ Loads of Refuse taken from ashpits ..	3,008
„ Sanitary Bins emptied	48,988
„ Loads of Refuse from sanitary bins ...	1,631
„ Cesspools cleansed	110
„ Privies converted to water carriage system	21

HOUSING.

No. of Houses for working classes	2,794
New Houses erected during year	1

Character of Defects found to exist in unfit houses—

Dampness and general defects and dilapidation,

STATISTICS FOR YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31ST, 1920.

No. of Dwelling-houses of which complaints were made that they are unfit for habitation	none
Action under Section 17 of Housing Act, 1909—	
(a) No. of Dwelling-houses inspected under section ...	269
(b) No Unfit for Habitation	133
(c) No. of Dwelling-houses, the defects of which were remedied without closing orders	—
Action under Section 28 of the Housing Acts, 1919—	
No. of Orders for Repairs issued	72
„ Cases of Repairs carried out by Local Authority ...	none
„ Dwelling-houses voluntarily closed by Owners ...	none
„ Representations made with a view to the making of Closing Orders	none

In conclusion, I have to thank the Chairman and members of the Sanitary Committee for the kindness shown in the discharge of my duties, and also the Medical Officer, Clerk and Surveyor for their willingness to tender me advice at any time.

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient servant,

W. E. CAINE,

M.R.S. Institute.

March, 1921.